

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application, as amended, and consideration of the following remarks.

Amendments

Applicant has amended the claims to more particularly point out what Applicant regards as the invention. Claims 1-3, 5, 7-18, and 26-35 remain in this application. Claims 4, 6, and 19-25 have been canceled. Claims 1, 7, 9, 16, have been amended. New claims 26-35 were added. No new matter has been added as a result of these amendments. Support for the amendments can be found, for example, as follows: for claim 1 in claims 1 and 4 as filed; for claim 7 in claims 1, 4, and 7 as filed; for claim 9 in claims 1, 4, and 9 as filed; claim 16 was amended merely to correct an obvious typographical error; for claim 26 in claims 1 and 6 as filed and page 26, lines 6-8 of the specification; for claim 27 in claims 18 and 25 as filed; for claim 28 in claims 19 and 10 as filed; for claim 29 in claim 20 as filed; for claim 30 in claim 21 as filed; for claim 31 in claim 22 as filed; for claim 32 in claim 23 as filed; for claim 33 in claim 22 as filed and page 26 lines 12-14 of the specification; for claim 34 in claim 24 as filed, and for claim 35 in claim 25 as filed.

Rejections

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-15 and 17-24

Claims 1-15 and 17-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Mitschelle et al., USPN 5,777,951, in combination with Official Notices that object identifiers, titanium housings, and use of towing trucks are well known in the art.

Generally, Applicants' invention as presently claimed relates to parking systems, methods, and parking meters useful for such systems and methods, which present significant differences and advantages as compared to Mitshelle. The parking meter disclosed in Mitshelle is designed essentially to direct parking authorities to parking meter violations (column 1 lines 63-64), to initiate parking monitoring via sensor rather than coin activation (column 2 lines 2-4), and to aid ticketing of parking violations for vehicles not caught by parking authorities (column 2 lines 35-37). By contrast, the invention in various embodiments as presently claimed might provide one or more different advantages, such as flexibility to accommodate various parking permission schemes, potential to minimize the need for or to entirely eliminate meter maids and/or other parking enforcement employees, and prevention of overpayment of parking fees by users. Such features are not disclosed or even suggested anywhere in the prior art of record. Consequently, the rejections under 35 USC §103 are avoided by amendment or traversed as detailed below in relation to each claim.

The rejection of claim 1 is avoided by amendment. Specifically, claim 1 now recites "an authorization input device ... comprising a user identity input". The parking meter described in Mitshelle does not contain a corresponding feature, nor do the Official Notices encompass it. Thus, the rejection should be withdrawn because the prior art does not teach the invention as claimed in amended claim 1.

It would not be obvious to modify the Mitshelle parking meter to supply a user identity input partly because there is no motivation for providing a similar feature, i.e. this feature would be useless in connection with the Mitshelle parking meter. This limitation is useful in enabling deployment of some of the systems and methods described in the specification, for example such as those encompassed by current claims 14 and 31. In these embodiments, user

identity input is necessary for automatic parking permission decisions and/or parking user account updating; the non-obviousness of these systems and methods in light of the prior art is discussed below, and substantiates the lack of motivation to modify the Mitshelle parking meter to obtain the parking meter according to claim 1. As neither Mitshelle nor any other prior art of record suggests the desirability of a user identity input, it would not be obvious to modify Mitshelle to obtain the invention as claimed in claim 1.

Claims 2, 3, 5, 7-9 depend from claim 1 and should therefore be patentable over Mitshelle at least for the same reasons as claim 1.

The rejection of claim 10 is respectfully traversed as follows. The invention as claimed in claim 10 is drawn to a system of parking enforcement. A claim limitation is “a database comprising ... a parking permission type associated with each unique identification code”. Neither Mitshelle nor any other prior art reference of record describes or suggests a system with a corresponding feature. Thus, the rejection should be withdrawn because the prior art does not teach the invention as claimed in amended claim 10.

It would not be obvious to modify the Mitshelle parking meter to provide a database comprising permission types because neither Mitshelle nor any other prior art reference suggests systems with comparable capabilities. Perhaps the element of the Mitshelle disclosure closest to a permission type as in claim 10 is the parking rate that is to preset to the parking meter. Not only does this meter-located permission type not anticipate claim 10, but it also cannot enable the potential uses of the system according to claim 10. The system according to claim 10 allows implementation of parking schemes of unlimited complexities, which could be achieved employing a single type of parking meter. Permission types according to claim 10 are not limited to paid metered parking as in Mitshelle, but might include limited time free parking,

reserved, or restricted parking, etc. The system according to claim 10 thus provides the flexibility necessary to large parking facilities or municipalities for deploying complex and possibly variable parking plans. Since the desirability of such a system is not appreciated by Mitschelle or the rest of the prior art, the rejection under 35 USC 103(a) of the invention as claimed in claim 10 should be withdrawn.

Claims 11-18 and 27 depend from claim 10 and are therefore non-obvious at least for the same reasons as claim 10. Nevertheless, some additional reasons for their non-obviousness are mentioned below.

Claim 14 is drawn to embodiments encompassing parking user accounts that may be updated according to parking time used. These embodiments present the advantage that users are not overcharged for coins deposited for parking time that ends up not being used. Accordingly, users do not have to estimate their parking needs and choose to err either on the side of overpaying for time not used or receiving a ticket for underestimating the amount of time needed. Such a capability cannot be achieved by the Mitschelle parking meter, and its advantages are not contemplated or suggested by any prior art reference of record.

Claims 16 and 25

Claims 16 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Mitschelle in combination with Bucholz et al., US 2004/0201460A1.

Claim 25 was canceled.

This rejection of claim 16 is respectfully traversed as follows. Bucholz is particularly inadequate to supplement the missing elements of Mitschelle in relation to claim 16. As Examiner noted, Bucholz discloses connecting cameras incorporated into traffic management systems to the Amber Alert system. Claim 16, on the other hand, relates to embodiments

where parking meters comprise output displays that can be used in conveying Amber Alert details to parking users or any passers by. Unlike canceled claim 25, embodiments of claim 16 do not make use of cameras associated with parking meters, but rather use the output display as public information dissemination media, thus aiding TV, radio, or billboard media. Such a feature is absent in Mitshelle. Bucholz also is concerned with identifying vehicles and informing law enforcement, not in broadcasting information to the public. Therefore, in addition to the reasons for non-obviousness of claim 10, claim 16 is also non-obvious over the Mitshelle/Bucholz combination.

Claim 26 is drawn to a parking meter capable of extracting and conveying license plate number information. Mitschelle, on the other hand, describes parking meters that may convey only the entire image, with no necessity of extracting license plate number. A parking meter according to claim 26 would be useful, for example, in embodiments such as those encompassed by claim 33. They would be particularly convenient to users who would not need to spend time by a parking meter to obtain parking authorization. Neither Mitshelle nor any other reference of record provides any motivation to modify the Mitshelle parking meter to enable such an application.

New claim 28 relates to a method of parking enforcement. Particularly, the claim recites the method step “retrieving by the controller from a database a permission type associated with the monitored parking space”. Accordingly, the arguments for non-obviousness of claim 10 over Mitshelle presented above apply to claim 28 as well.

Claims 29-35 depend from claim 28, and should therefore be patentable at least for the same reasons. In addition, the reasons presented above for the non-obviousness of claim 14 in light of Mitshelle also apply to new claim 32.

Applicants have considered references Yost et al. (USPN 6,229,455) and Takahashi et al. (USPN 5,646,853) but deem them to be no more relevant than Mitshelle for the patentability of the pending claims.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submits that Applicants' invention as claimed in claims 1-3, 5, 7-18, and 26-35 as amended is not rendered obvious by Mitshelle in combination with Bucholz, the Official Notices, or other prior art of record, and respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Miscellaneous

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner acknowledges receipt of the Information Disclosure Statement filed concurrently with the specification.

Conclusion

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted by Applicants that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the rejections is requested. Allowance of the claims at an early date is solicited.

Date: 7/12/05

Respectfully submitted,



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